(c) No.

(d) Iran is not a SAARC Member and gas supplies from Iran are not part of the SAARC agenda.

Pakistan's help to North Korea

947. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan is helping North Korea in its nuclear weaponry;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken at diplomatic levels to dissuade Pakistan in the matter of supply of nuclear weapons to North Korea?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The U.S. State Department announced on October 16, 2002, that during the visit of Assistant Secretary James A. Kelly to North Korea in early October, North Korea admitted to having a programme to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. A *New York Times* report published on October 18, 2002 quoted US intelligence officials having stated that Pakistan was a major supplier of critical equipment for DPRK's clandestine nuclear weapons programme. The report stated that equipment such as gas centrifuges used to create weapons-grade uranium appeared to have been "part of a barter deal" beginning in the 90s in which North Korea supplied Pakistan with missiles in turn.

(c) The problem of clandestine transfers and acquisition of missile and nuclear technologies involving Pakistan is a matter of deep concern because Pakistan today is the epicentre of international terrorism. The adverse effect of such developments on India's security have been highlighted by the Government in its interactions with its interlocutors.